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Gina Buckley

Supporting Art in Low-Income Education

LS 400:Senior Capstone

Advisor: Browning Neddeau

Abstract

This Capstone Paper focused on implementing art into low-income communities. The participants for the Capstone Project included 32 fifth-grade students in a public elementary school located on California's Central Coast. The Capstone Project began by showing the students a video with figurative language music. After that, the researcher showed a presentation on the different figurative language to help the students understand the project better. The students then got into groups of four and created a poster on each of the different figurative language. After that, the next day, the students created Paint-Chip Poetry to reflect on what they had learned about figurative language. The projects findings concluded that art helped the students concentrate on studies for the rest of the day. The Capstone Project connects to becoming a future educator to help incorporate arts in the classrooms so it can benefit the student academics.

Keywords: Figurative Language, Low-Income communities, Implementing Art

Supporting Arts in Low-Income Education

How can we help low income students thrive by implementing art into their education?

Iwanaga says, “each year less and less funds are provided for the art department in schools, especially in low income areas.” Iwanaga (2002), He then says, “poor, inner-city and rural schools bear a disproportionate share of the losses. Studies show children from low-income families are less likely to be consistently involved in arts activities or instruction than children from high-income families” (Iwanaga, 2002). Middle-class students have more of an advantage than low-income students when it comes to having art in their classrooms. Implementing arts into after school programs could be a positive concept for the low income students. Low income students are identified as, “students who do not attend college or who drop out quickly are predominantly persons from low-income families, living in underdeveloped areas within major cities or in sparsely populated rural areas, and who have attended ineffective elementary and secondary schools” (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

There are many parents who are not able to pick up their children after school, because they work many different hours just to survive, so they enroll them in a after school program (According to the U.S. Department of Justice, “after-school arts programs not only it increases the academic achievement of at-risk youth; but also decreases drug use and juvenile delinquency. But increases self-esteem, and increases positive interactions and connections with peers and adults” (Clawson & Coolbaugh , 2001). There are students do not have it easy at home, and the after school programs, art can save students academically and mentally.

As the arts are disappearing in public schools, many studies have been done to show that art should still be implemented in classrooms because it impacts students in positive ways. Jacobs (2019) states “students’ who took an elective arts class in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade

had significantly higher grade point averages (GPAs), and better scores on standardized reading and math tests, than their peers who were not exposed to the arts.” “Being a low-income student is hard because some do not have the social skills that other students might. Many students showed a stronger social, behavioral, language, motor, and cognitive skills seven years earlier in preschool” (Jacobs, 2019). This shows us that low-income students can thrive in all aspects when art is implemented in their schooling.

Another important reason why art should be supported into education is it can help students have a pathway to college. Elpus (2005), did his research and found that;

“Art students, 21% , are more likely than non-arts students to have attended a post-secondary institution two years past high school graduation. 66% of the nation’s students’ graduated high school having earned one or more credits in an art class. By age 30, student’s who had pursued arts in education while in high school were 55% more likely to have attended college than non-arts peers. Also, art students were 2.94 times as likely as non-arts students to pursue arts degrees in college”(Elpus, 2005).

As shown, students who take art classes end up doing well in their classes even being a low-income student.

Students understand that being low-income puts them at greater risk, and less of engagement in the classroom. For example, Finn’s (1993), “behavioral risk factors are indeed related to significant outcomes of schooling even within racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, or language groups.” Another key topic is, “risk behaviors have their roots in the early school years, or even before (Finn, 1993).” Usually teachers cannot identify or see the risk that students have at an early age. This may pose the question, how does this relate to supporting art in low-income

education? Students are at risk from their socioeconomic background and art can help these students positively.

Why is art important for fifth graders that are in low-income schools? Art has many different components in art which are, visual arts, music, dance, and theater. Miriam Myers (2018) found that, “fifth graders compares and interprets works of art. He is able to create works of art by selecting subject matter, elements, composition, media, and techniques to communicate an idea, mood, or feeling. He works with warm and cool colors, and contrast and perspective to show depth” (Myers, 2018). This time where the students are learning about different aspects of art helps them understand the key elements to why art is so important especially for fifth graders. Laurel Cratsley (2017) states, “the arts bring a sense of community into the classroom, foster decision-making skills, and promote cultural awareness that transcends the walls of the school” (Cratsley, 2017).

Evaluations of Options

There are three options that have been discovered that can be effective for low income students. For the first option is, to have state/federal help to fund art classes. For this section it will discuss what the state already does for art classes, and what else the state can contribute to help fund art classes. The second option can be implementing art in the classrooms and in afterschool programs. Having this option may help low-income schools, especially when the parents usually work unconventional hours. If there were arts in afterschool programs, then it could be helpful for low income students to maintain their grades and stay out of trouble. The third option would be getting student results. This is seeing their achievements from the art classes and relating it to their school-work. The three options are evaluated by different criteria, the first option is cost, the second is time, and the third is effectiveness.

Table 1

Evaluation of Options B

	Option 1 State/Federal help Fund Art Classes	Option 2 In Class/After School Programs	Option 3 Getting Student Results(Achievement s)
Cost	High	High/Moderate	Low
Time	Moderate	High	Moderate
Effectiveness	Moderate/Low	High	Moderate

Option 1: State and Federal help to fund art classes

In this option it will discuss how Title I provides for art classes in schools and any extra funding from the state can help low income students in the art classes. In Title I uses funds for art's educational programs, and to provide tools to school leaders on the ground for planning and implementation (Smyth, 2016). Title I, "had spent in 2014 was \$14.5 billion overall; California's share was \$1.7 billion. Every school district received at least some Title I with funding and for many schools with over 40% low-income students, Title I has funds that represent a potentially powerful supplement to their annual programs" (Smyth, 2016). There are three grants that are funded for programs, these are;

"Basic Grant, Concentration Grants, targeted grants, and education finance incentive grants. The basic grant is, providing funds to Local Educational Agencies (LEA) in which the number of children counted in the formula is at least ten and exceeds 2 percent of an LEA's school-age population" (U.S. Department of Education). The concentration grant provided funds to LEA's that are eligible for basic grants and in which the number of formula children exceeds 6,500, to 15 percent of LEA's (U.S. Department of Education). For targeted grants, they provide funds to LEA's in which the number of formula children is at least ten and at least 5% of the

LEA's school-age population. The last grant being the Education finance incentive grant, this applies to the states' effort to provide financial support for education compared to its relative wealth." See table 1.

Option 2: In Class/After school Programs

Another focus to help low-income students do well with their education would be to have dedicated art classes during school hours for the students. Also, students that are classified as low-income students do not usually get to go straight home after school. Their parents are working when they get out of school, and has the children enrolled in an after school program. Having art implemented into after school programs can save many students from being at risk. According to (Charmaraman, 2012) in her study, she wants the students to be more active in out of school programs when it comes to art. With these programs it helps students re engage their own learning and that helps them become more successful (Charmaraman, 2012). Also, in Charmaraman's research, she states "that in poor communities, young people may have a particularly difficult time finding opportunities to feel valued and accepted as engaged citizens, which makes youth development programs so vital in order for young people to remain connected to their communities" (Charmaraman, 2012).

It can also be hard to fund these after school art programs because every year there is a budget cut and that can impact the students learning. An education policy analyst named, Rebecca Fine says, "when we look at fine arts programs across the state, we see that rural schools and low-income schools are being affected the most by these budget cuts" (Wendler, 2019). There is this gap between low-income students to upper-class students, and this defines who you are as a person. Marybeth conducted research on after school programs by interviewing over 40 students, and she concluded that, "the undesirable behaviors that can take place during

after-school hours, we must provide alternatives to boredom, provide opportunities for children to establish trusting relationships with adults, foster positive self-esteem, and increase resiliency” (Gasman, 2003). In order for these after school programs to become successful for our low-income students, there would be a need for money and teachers who are passionate about helping students that come from harsh backgrounds in doing better.

Option 3: Getting Student Results (Achievements)

This option will talk about how art is beneficial to student achievement. There was a study from students that attended the University of California at Los Angeles, research database, with a little more than 25,000 students that were in middle school and high school. The students found that “students with high arts involvement performed better on standardized achievement tests than students with low arts involvement. Moreover, high arts-involved students also watched fewer hours of TV, participated in more community service and reported less boredom in school” (Catterall, 2002). There is a study of a few seventh grade boys, “that were in special education, and they used visual arts helped them become more sophisticated, less reluctant readers. Described as learning disabled, the boys were encouraged to use visual forms of expression to convey their understanding of reading assignments. After a nine-week course of “visualization training,” they also took a more active role in reading and began to interpret text rather than passively reading it” (Wilhelm, 2002). As we can see, there are many roles art can play in helping low income students achieve in other subjects.

Project

This Capstone project will occur at a public elementary school in Monterey Peninsula County, with a fifth grade class. With the topic being Supporting Arts in Low-Income Education, it will be based off of implementing art with low-income students. The teacher and the

community partner then decided for the teacher to do a lesson plan on figurative language, and then the next day Paint-chip poetry. The students had to get into groups of five to each work on a different figurative language. Then after that, the next day, the students then worked individually on creating their own paint-chip poetry.

Capstone Project

Being a low-income student can negatively impact students when it comes to their academics, but studies found implementing art can help change that in a positive way. After overseeing the research done, being a low-income student can have that negative connotation of not being able to do well in academics. There is a lot of pressure on teachers because they have to teach students all of the state standards, but it is harder when it comes to low-income students. Implementing art into the classrooms can significantly increase the student academics that are considered low-income. This capstone research project digs into supporting arts in low-income communities, which schools may offer if the budget is there. Many times with low-income schools, the budget cuts short and the school is forced to cut out art and other electives. With use of teachers, parents, students, and administration and the funds this can help students succeed in their academics. Specifically, having students do group art projects together can also have a positive impact.

Design

At the public elementary school where the capstone project was done at, it is known for it to be a low-income area, in Monterey Peninsula County. The school's overall vision, is being able to engage the students learning experiences by being able to collaborate with different partnerships. For the students' future, the school wants them to have intellectual, social, and personal knowledge. When it comes to having parent support in this school, it can be hard since

many low-income students attend this school. The school values having dignity and respect towards yourself and to anyone you come into contact with. In order to have a healthy community the school believes you should have honesty, responsibility, and trust. With this, the students are able to focus on their academics.

For the capstone project, fifth-grade students created posters in groups of five to explain what a simile, metaphor, a personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and hyperbole. Then the students were able to express what each color meant to them by writing it down on the colored paper, and expressing what they learned from the paint chip poetry. With this project, the goal of it is to see how much of an advantage low-income students have when art is implemented into the classroom.

Implementation

This project started with the teacher coming into the classroom and debriefing what was going to happen for the next two days. The teacher started the lesson plan with a powerpoint up going over the different figurative languages that were discussed in the lesson plan. While this was going on, the students were required to take notes on it, hence they were able to use the notes for the poster they created for figurative language. The teacher then split them into groups of six and each group had one figurative language to work on. After the students finished with that, they got colored paper and created a poem with that specific color to describe how it feels to them. While this was going on the students were able to ask questions if they were confused on

what to do. Here is an example of a group of students poster on Similes.

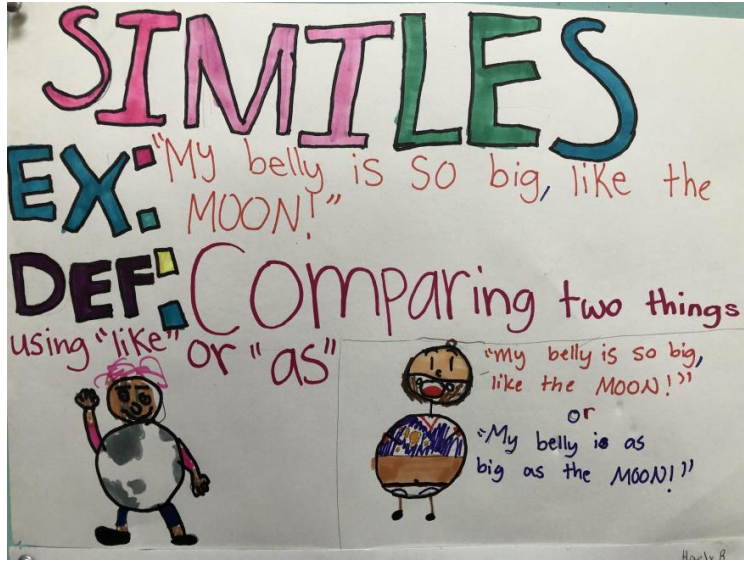


Figure 1. Students example of defining what a simile is.

For this first example, the students did well showing their understanding of defining what a simile was, plus drawing pictures of it as well. Here are some more examples of what the students did.

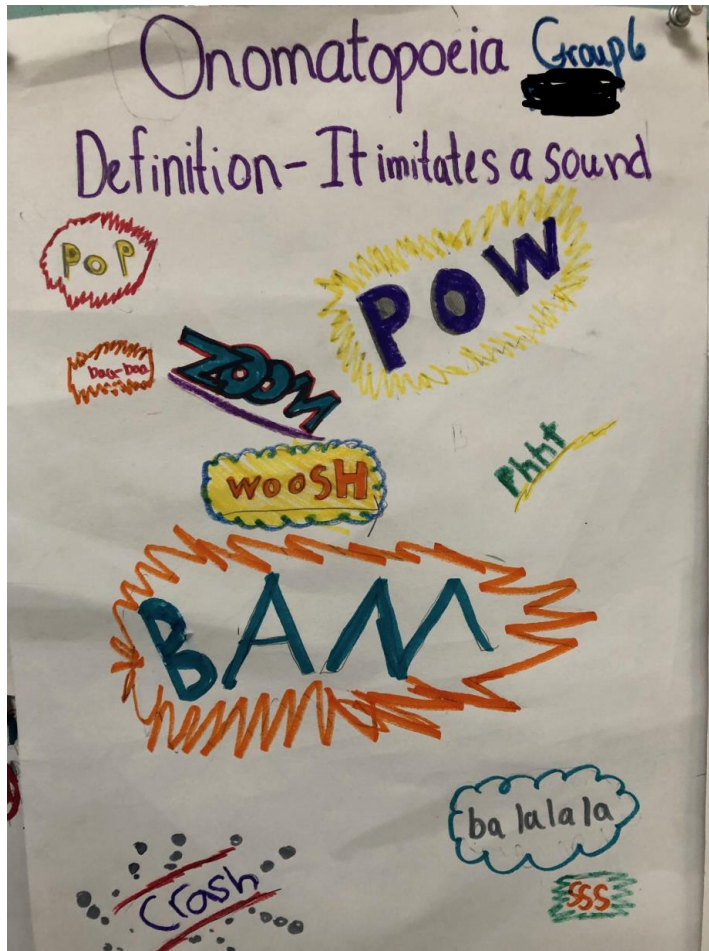


Figure 2. Students example of defining/creating a picture of Onomatopoeia is.

The next day, the teacher came back and explain what the students were going to do next, and that was Paint-Chip Poetry. The students worked independently on this portion of the lesson plan, so they could really understand the purpose of the figurative language. Here is two examples of what the students did.

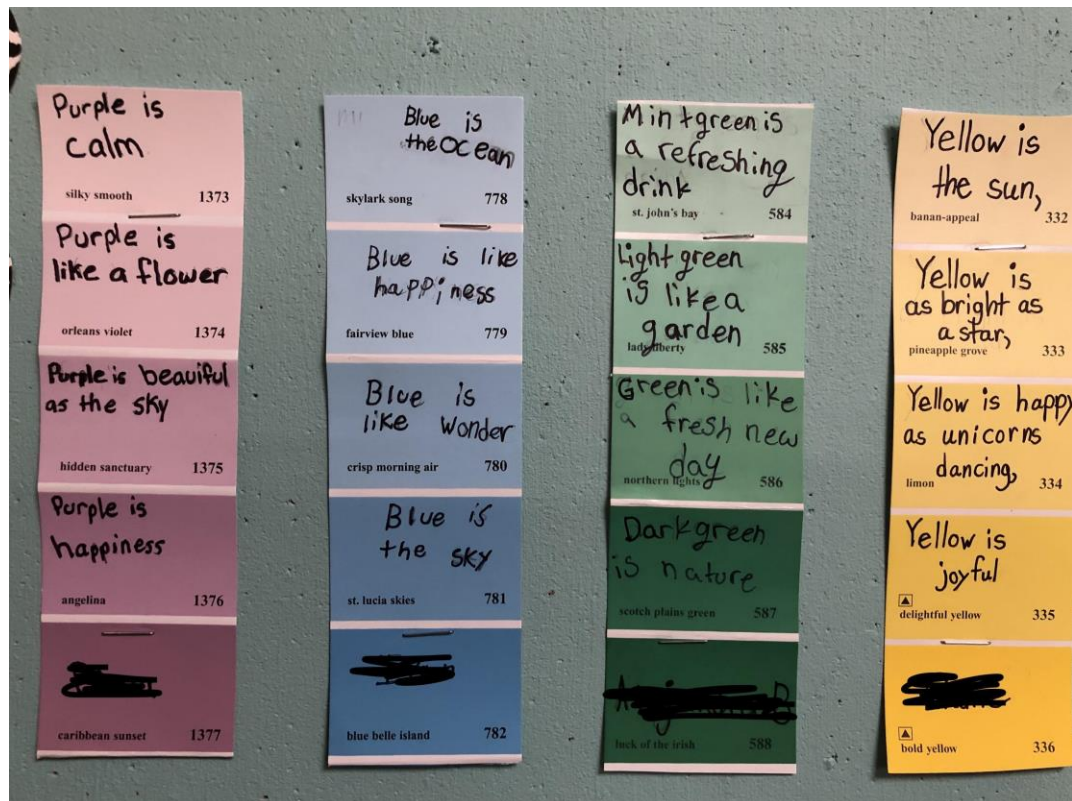


Figure 3. The students picked one color and wrote what the color was, and examples of it.

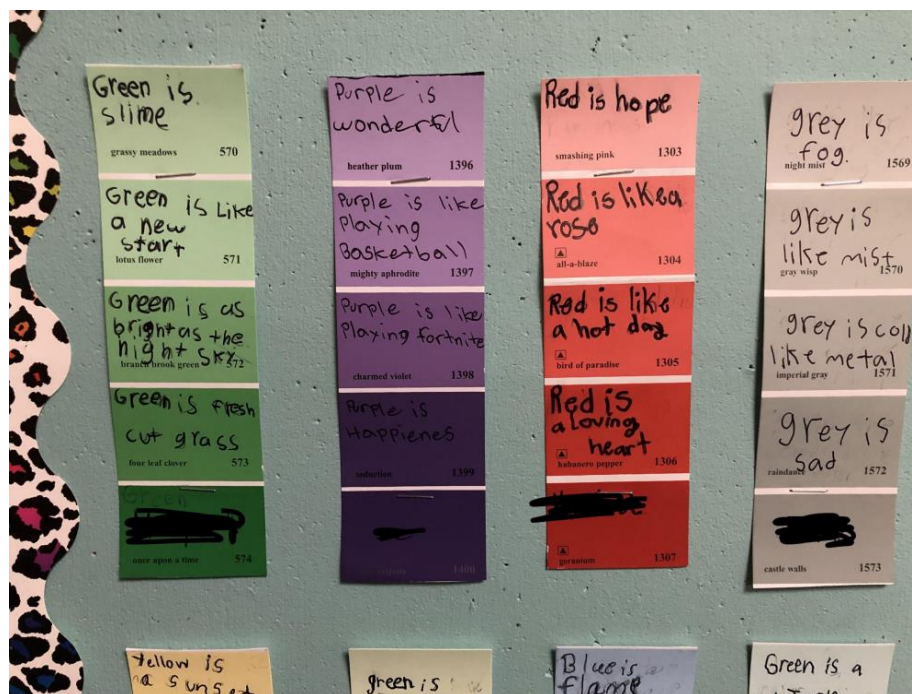


Figure 4. Students identified the different colors, and related it to figurative language.

Evaluation

The overall results for the project is it helped students gain a better understanding of what figurative language was and how to use it in a poem. While the lesson was going on there were many students that continued to raise their hands because they wanted to show both teachers the poems they created and the poster they created for figurative language. For example, this group of students came up to the teacher and asked how to draw a picture for similes and they were confused about the definition. The teacher then helped explain to the group of students for that particular figurative language, and they drew one of the best pictures. The students were excited to do color, draw, and work with their peers throughout this lesson plan.

There were some challenges along the way as to doing this lesson plan because, the scheduling with the community partner. The school was on break for two weeks, and when they got back is when the project was conducted. It was a short time span, but the community partner was sure it would be a good time for the students to get back into the rhythm of it and have them focus on art. In order for the teacher to teach the lesson, it was needed for the teacher to go in a few times before, so the students could get used to someone else teaching the class a lesson plan. After the lesson plan was taught and the students left for recess, the community partner said the teacher did an amazing job and could tell the students were engaged and wanted to learn. The goal of this project was to implement arts into low-income schools and see the effect it has on the students education, and it was successful.

Reflection

In this reflection, the researcher will be discussing the outcomes of the capstone project, the recommendations, future plans for the capstone paper, and concluding it all.

Discussion

For this project, the goal was to see how well to implement art into the classroom could help low-income students reach academic success. Being a low-income student can hurt students in their academics, because the parents do not have the right resources to help their child succeed. With all the state standards that put pressure on the students, it can impact the low-income students the most. The project was aimed to see how implementing art into the classroom helps students do better academically and behavior wise.

Implementing art in a low-income school, even a classroom takes time. The time it took to put the project together was about a day of going over ideas, then setting up a time that worked with the teacher's schedule. It could have been helpful if the project could last the whole school day, but the teacher could not allow more than an hour for two days. As the project started the teacher explained to the students what was going to happen, and another teacher was going to teach them an art lesson. In English Language Arts (ELA), the students have been introduced to figurative language, but now the students were going to learn more about it and create posters on it.

The teacher took over and presented different figurative languages, and the students had to take notes so it helped them with the project they were going to do. After the powerpoint was finished, the teacher put the students into six different groups with about five to six people in each group for different figurative languages. The students then looked over their notes on figurative language they were assigned and created a definition, then an example of the word being used, and a picture. After they were done with it they presented it to the class, and all the students enjoyed that part of the lesson.

After that, the next day, the teacher came back and explained to the students they were going to do paint-chip Poetry. The teacher showed the order for each line (metaphor, a simile,

and metaphor) and an example. Their metaphors and similes had to relate to their paint-chip color to give meaning. This helped the students understand the different figurative languages and how you can use the colors. At the end of this project, the teacher collected all of the work and the students did a reflection of what they learned from this project. The student response was very exciting and wanting to do more art lessons in the classroom. The teacher stayed for two more hours to observe the students behavior and the students were more focused on the work in class.

A big limitation that the project had was the time the teacher had to teach the lesson plan. The lesson plan could have gone on for two hours each day, but since the teacher had a tight schedule, an hour for two days was the best it could be. Finding the right day where the teacher believed the students would be able to focus and listen to another teacher was the next limitation there was. The schedule between both of the teachers were hard, because the students were on spring break for two weeks, and the first day back from break the students would not have focused with another teacher, so the project was done on a Wednesday and Thursday. This also was hard for the teacher teaching the lesson plan, because schedules were different for both of them.

The last limitation there was for this project, was simply finding a project that would be efficient and not too hard for the teacher to teach to the class. Finding a lesson plan that would benefit the students and give the teacher the research what was needed was extremely hard, but in the end the teacher and community partner came to an agreement for the project. Between the community partner and the teacher, the project was changed about three times because there were different ideas, and the timing of the project was not that convenient. The

project was conducted in Monterey County, so going in at any time was not a problem, but doing the lesson plan and planning a good time was the hardest part of the project.

Recommendations

Even though the project went well, there is always room for improvement when implementing art into the classroom. The first thing that could have gone differently was, to make sure to talk to the community partner ahead of time and do the project early on. Having a limited amount of time to do the project was stressful, and the community partner could not have done it any day, you had to plan it out the schedule she had. Another recommendation for the project, was being on the same page as the community partner because the project got changed about three times, and that caused stress on both the teacher and community partner. Hence, there was a certain amount of time to figure out what the project was going to be, so that was extremely hard to determine.

The last recommendation to help this project run successfully was having more time for the project in class. The community partner had a tight schedule with the students, getting them ready for state testing and with the students going on spring break. A big thing that could be helpful with this project is having a secure relationship with the community partner and the students in the classroom so the project could run even more smoothly. Even though the teacher had a busy schedule and the community partner, still creating that relationship could have made the whole process run well. With this being a fifth-grade class, the students highly enjoyed another teacher coming in and teaching them an art lesson.

Future Plans to Build on the Capstone

After the project was conducted, the students enjoyed doing this project, so an idea came about by implementing this kind of art to future students. By this, teachers could spend half a

class day on learning about figurative language and the teachers can collaborate and bring the students together from other classrooms to share what they learned and it can affect other students in different classrooms. Seeing this come into effect, would be beneficial towards the capstone since the main focus is to see how implementing art in low-income education can support these students. Another way by implementing the project in the classrooms could be, having the students put together a folder of the different figurative languages, and for three weeks teach the students different ones, and at the end reflect on the students work to see how effective that lesson was for them. This can help the students focus more on their academics, plus have fun learning about art. With both of these ideas, students can still met the state standards that the teacher has to teach them, but help the low-income students do well in their academics. This can help future teachers when working with low-income students, and also passing it on to future educators with no knowledge of it.

Conclusion

The main purpose of the project was to determine if implementing art can help low-income students with their education. This project gave the teacher great evidence to help support the topic of the capstone. Low-income students tend to not do well in their academics because they experience different things that a middle-class student usually would not go through. Overall, the project did go well, but of course there is always things you can improve after teaching a lesson plan. In order to have a successful project, it is needed to not procrastinate on actually teaching the lesson plan, because it creates stress on both the teacher and the community partner.

As for the whole Capstone paper, the purpose of this project was to see how implementing art into low-income education can benefit students academics. Throughout the capstone paper, being considered low-income can have negative effects on the students because

their peers around them could be middle-class and they have the stigma of not making it past high school. Implementing art into classrooms more than schools already do can help the students do well in their academics. Overall, throughout the research of this capstone project, helped the researcher find the areas of need and will continue the study after this paper.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

5-Step Lesson Plan: Figurative Language & Paint Chip Poetry

Total Lesson Time: 50 minutes for two days

Learning Objective: Students will identify what figurative language is.

Lesson

Lesson Overview: The subject is poetry and figurative language, and the students learned about figurative language, relationships to words, and the meaning of words. The students created Paint Chip Poetry and then made a poster board in groups to create what an idiom, hyperbole, alliteration, simile, metaphor, and the personification. For this lesson plan, it centered around fifth grade students. For the learning outcomes, Students will, identify language, including similes and metaphors, in context. The students will, interpret what the different colors mean to them, and use examples. This will help the fifth graders have a better understanding of the different use of figurative language.

Implementation (approximately 2 hours): This activity fits into the general context of what is being taught to the students because, the students learned step by step what figurative language is, and how to use it. For the teaching strategy, the students were able to reflect how this lesson went for them and share with their partner how they felt about it. Being able to see the students engage and enjoy the lesson plan made it easier the community partner to teach the class the rest of the day, because the students stayed on task and did not mess around. As the planning was going on for the lesson plan, it took about two class periods to do so. It was about 50 minutes each day, because anything longer than that the students would lose focus.

Procedure: First the teacher engaged the students by showing them a video in figurative language in music. Then the teacher showed a powerpoint of different types of figurative language: Idiom, hyperbole, alliteration, simile, metaphor, and the personification. To show modeling to the students, the teacher showed them previous work students did in previous classes. (Community partner gave previous work to show). Throughout the lesson, the teacher guided the students by going around and helping them when they did not know what to do, or were confused. In order for the students to work independently they had to take notes during the powerpoint so when the students got into groups they could use the notes to refer to. After the students learned about figurative language, they worked independently to create a Paint Chip Poem using the correct format and type of Figurative Language, as well as relating the words to their paint chip color meaning. As the lesson came to an end, the teacher use this time to reflect on what each student learned from this. Most of the students shared out, and were very excited to tell the teachers how it went. In about a week after the project the teacher will go back to the classroom to connect with the community partner to talk to students about the overall message about this lesson plan.

Materials and Resources: The community partner helped supply the materials used for the lesson plan since the community partner had the materials already in the classroom. The students were presented a powerpoint to understand the different types of figurative language, and for the Paint Chip poetry. For the resources the students used, white computer paper, and construction paper for the Paint Chip poetry portion, markers, crayons, and pens.

Standards and Assessments: The standards for fifth grade students is CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5 : Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. Next is, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.5.A Interpret figurative language, including similes

and metaphors, in context. For the assessment plan, the students performance will be assessed by how well they did the posters and the Paint Chip poetry portion of the lesson plan. The students did well with this part, and after debriefing with the community partner it went well.

Appendix B

